

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-38 (Cancelled).

39. (currently amended): A method of producing an implant loaded with a pharmaceutical active comprising the steps:

a) providing a coated implant having a coating of cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix on its external surface, the cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix comprising a polymer having pendant zwitterionic groups and pendant cationic groups, the coating having a dry thickness of at least 0.1 μm ; and

b) contacting the coated implant with a solution or dispersion of a pharmaceutical active in a an aqueous solvent whereby the solvent partially swells the said polymer matrix and the pharmaceutical active is absorbed into or adsorbed onto the polymer matrix.

40. (canceled).

41. (canceled).

42. (previously presented): A method according to claim 39 in which the solvent is organic and which additionally comprises, following step b) a step:

c) drying the treated implant to remove the solvent.

43. (previously presented): A method according to claim 42 in which the removal is by evaporation.

44. (previously presented): A method according to claim 39 in which the step b) of contacting the coated implant involves dipping the implant into a volume of the said solution or dispersion.

45. (previously presented): A method according to claim 39 in which the implant is a stent.

46. (previously presented): A method according to claim 45 in which the stent is mounted on a delivery device prior to said contacting step b).

47. (previously presented): A method according to claim 44 in which step b) lasts at least 30s.

48. (previously presented): A method according to claim 39 in which step a) comprises the sub-steps:-

- a i) providing an uncoated implant;
- a ii) coating the implant with a cross-linkable polymer; and
- a iii) cross-linking the cross-linkable polymer to form the said cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix.

49. (previously presented): A method according to claim 41 in which the pharmaceutical active is a nucleic acid.

50. (previously presented): A method according to claim 41 in which the pharmaceutical active is a protein which is anionically charged at physiological pH.

51. (previously presented): A method according to claim 50 in which the protein is an antibody or a fragment thereof.

52. (previously presented): A method according to claim 48 in which the cross-linkable polymer is formed from ethylenically unsaturated monomers including

- a) a zwitterionic monomer of the formula I



wherein B is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally include one or more fluorine substituents;

X is an organic group having a zwitterionic moiety; and

Y is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group;

- b) a cationic monomer of the formula II



wherein B¹ is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y¹ is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group; and

Q is an organic group having a cationic or cationisable moiety and

- c) a crosslinkable monomer having the general formula IV:



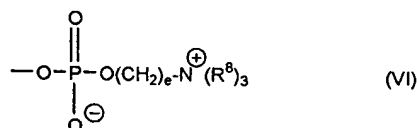
wherein B³ is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y³ is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group; and

Q³ is an organic group having a reactive group capable of cross-linking the polymer.

53. (previously presented): A method according to claim 52 in which Q³ is a group SiR⁴₃ in which each R⁴ is a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group or a halogen atom.

54. (previously presented): A method according to claim 52 in which X is a group of formula VI



where the groups R⁸ are the same or different and each is hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl, and e is from 1 to 6.

55. (previously presented): A method according to claim 52 in which Q¹ is selected from the group consisting of N⁺R⁵₃, P⁺R⁵₃ and S⁺R⁵₂

in which the groups R⁵ are the same or different and are each selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C₁₋₄-alkyl and aryl, or two of the groups R⁵ together with the heteroatom to which they are attached form a saturated or unsaturated heterocyclic ring containing from 5 to 7 atoms.

56. (previously presented): A method according to claim 52 in which the groups Y, Y¹ and y³ all have the general formula CH₂=C(R)C(O)A- in which A is -O- or -NR¹ where R¹ is hydrogen or a C₁₋₄ alkyl group, and R is hydrogen or a C₁₋₄ alkyl group.

57. (currently amended): A method of producing an implant loaded with a pharmaceutical active comprising the steps:

a) providing a coated implant having a coating of cross-linked water-swellaible polymer matrix on its external surface, the cross-linked water-swellaible polymer matrix comprising a polymer having pendant zwitterionic groups and pendant cationic groups; and

b) contacting the coated implant with a solution or dispersion of a pharmaceutical active which is a nucleic acid, in a an aqueous solvent whereby the solvent partially swells the said polymer matrix and the pharmaceutical active is absorbed into or adsorbed onto the polymer matrix.

58. (canceled).

59. (canceled).

60. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which the solvent is organic and which additionally comprises, following step b), a step:

c) drying the treated implant to remove the solvent.

61. (previously presented): A method according to claim 60 in which the removal is by evaporation.

62. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which the implant is a stent.

63. (previously presented): A method according to claim 62 in which the stent is mounted on a delivery device prior to said contacting step b).

64. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which step a) comprises the sub-steps:

a i) providing an uncoated implant;
a ii) coating the implant with a cross-linkable polymer; and
a iii) cross-linking the cross-linkable polymer to form the said cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix.

65. (previously presented): A method according to claim 64 in which the cross-linkable polymer is formed from ethylenically unsaturated monomers including

a) a zwitterionic monomer of the formula I



wherein B is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally include one or more fluorine substituents;

X is an organic group having a zwitterionic moiety; and

Y is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group;

b) a cationic monomer of the formula II



wherein B¹ is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y¹ is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group, and

Q is an organic group having a cationic or cationisable moiety and

c) a crosslinkable monomer having the general formula IV:



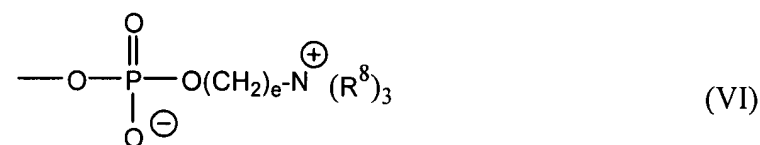
wherein B³ is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y³ is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group; and

Q³ is an organic group having a reactive group capable of cross-linking the polymer.

66. (previously presented): A method according to claim 65 in which Q³ is a group SiR⁴₃ in which R⁴ is a C₁₋₄ alkoxy group or a halogen atom.

67. (previously presented): A method according to claim 65 in which X is a group of formula VI



where the groups R⁸ are the same or different and each is hydrogen or C₁₋₄ alkyl, and e is from 1 to 6.

68. (previously presented): A method according to claim 65 in which Q¹ is selected from the group consisting of N⁺R⁵₃, P⁺R⁵₃ and S⁺R⁵₂

in which the groups R⁵ are the same or different and are each selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C₁₋₄-alkyl and aryl, or two of the groups R⁵ together with the heteroatom to which they are attached form a saturated or unsaturated heterocyclic ring containing from 5 to 7 atoms.

69. (previously presented): A method according to claim 65 in which the groups Y, Y¹ and Y³ all have the general formula CH₂=C(R)C(O)A- in which A is -O- or -NR¹ where R¹ is hydrogen or a C₁₋₄ alkyl group, and R is hydrogen or a C₁₋₄ alkyl group.

70. (currently amended): A method of producing an implant loaded with a pharmaceutical active comprising the steps:

- a) providing a coated implant having a coating of cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix on its external surface, the cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix comprising a polymer having pendant zwitterionic groups and pendant cationic groups; and
- b) contacting the coated implant with a solution or dispersion of a pharmaceutical active which is a protein in a an aqueous solvent, the protein being anionically charged at physiological pH, whereby the solvent partially swells the said polymer matrix and the pharmaceutical active is absorbed into or adsorbed onto the polymer matrix.

71. (canceled).

72. (canceled).

73. (previously presented): A method according to claim 70 in which the solvent is organic and which additionally comprises, following step b), a step:

- c) drying the treated implant to remove the solvent.

74. (previously presented): A method according to claim 73 in which the removal is by evaporation.

75. (previously presented): A method according to claim 70 in which the implant is a stent.

76. (previously presented): A method according to claim 75 in which the stent is mounted on a delivery device prior to said contacting step b).

77. (previously presented): A method according to claim 70 in which step a) comprises the sub-steps:

- a i) providing an uncoated implant;
- a ii) coating the implant with a cross-linkable polymer; and
- a iii) cross-linking the cross-linkable polymer to form the said cross-linked water-swellaable polymer matrix.

78. (previously presented): A method according to claim 77 in which the cross-linkable polymer is formed from ethylenically unsaturated monomers including

- a) a zwitterionic monomer of the formula I



wherein B is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally include one or more fluorine substituents;

X is an organic group having a zwitterionic moiety; and

Y is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group;

- b) a cationic monomer of the formula II



wherein B¹ is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group, any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y^1 is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group, and

Q is an organic group having a cationic or cationisable moiety and

c) a crosslinkable monomer having the general formula IV:



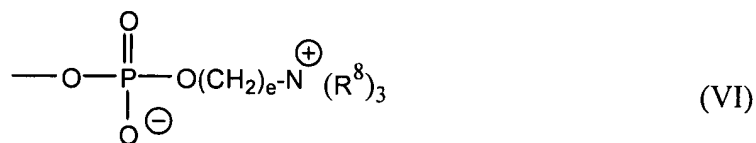
wherein B^3 is a bond or a straight or branched alkylene, alkylene-oxa-alkylene or alkylene-oligooxa-alkylene group any of which optionally includes one or more fluorine substituents;

Y^3 is an ethylenically unsaturated polymerisable group; and

Q^3 is an organic group having a reactive group capable of cross-linking the polymer.

79. (previously presented): A method according to claim 78 in which Q^3 is a group SiR^4_3 in which each R^4 is a C_{1-4} alkoxy group or a halogen atom.

80. (previously presented): A method according to claim 78 in which X is a group of formula VI



where the groups R^8 are the same or different and each is hydrogen or C_{1-4} alkyl, and e is from 1 to 6.

81. (previously presented): A method according to claim 78 in which Q^1 is selected from the group consisting of $N^+R^5_3$, $P^+R^5_3$ and $S^+R^5_2$

in which the groups R^5 are the same or different and are each selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-4} -alkyl and aryl, or two of the groups R^5 together with the heteroatom to which they are attached form a saturated or unsaturated heterocyclic ring containing from 5 to 7 atoms.

82. (previously presented): A method according to claim 78 in which the groups Y, Y^1 and Y^3 all have the general formula $CH_2=C(R)C(O)A$ - in which A is -O- or -NR¹ where R¹ is hydrogen or a C_{1-4} alkyl group, and R is hydrogen or a C_{1-4} alkyl group.

83. (previously presented): A method according to claim 70 in which the protein is an antibody or a fragment thereof.

84. (previously presented): A method according to claim 39 in which the protein is an antibody or a fragment thereof.

85. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which the nucleic acid is DNA or RNA.

86. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which the nucleic acid has a molecular weight higher than 1kD.

87. (previously presented): A method according to claim 86 in which the nucleic acid has a molecular weight higher than 1.2kD.

88. (previously presented): A method according to claim 85 in which the nucleic acid is linear or circular and is single or double stranded.

89. (previously presented): A method according to claim 57 in which the step b) of contacting the coated implant involves dipping the implant into a volume of the said solution or dispersion.

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90. (previously presented): A method according to claim 70 in which the step b) of contacting the coated implant involves dipping the implant into a volume of the said solution or dispersion.

91. (canceled).

92. (canceled).